

They plan to return to Fort Wayne on June 2.

The team is sponsored and supported by First Assembly of God, 3301 Coliseum Blvd. E., and will be working under the auspices of the denomination's Health Care Ministries division, based in Springfield, Mo.

Also being sent from Fort Wayne will be a semi-truckload of supplies and medicine donated by local hospitals. Bandages, thermometers, stethoscopes, medical gloves, quilts and other items are being donated by Lutheran Health Network.

Parkview Hospital is donating surgical and medical supplies, as well as antibiotics, diaper rash cream and vitamins. Van Wert Community Hospital in Ohio also is donating supplies and medicine.

This is the first time a medical team is being sent from the church, said Marilyn Tolbert, chairwoman of the church's mission committee.

"We've always wanted to do a medical trip," Tolbert said. The mission committee had contacted Health Care Ministries earlier in the year and was told all openings for people to participate in medical trips were filled.

Just two weeks ago, however, Health Care Ministries contacted the church and asked for a team of people to go to Albania. Church member Michelle Denton took on the task of finding the right people.

"The type of people they want there are people who are skilled in dealing with trauma," said Tolbert. "... These three were ready and willing to go."

They will be working out of tents and giving medical care to refugees who have crossed the Yugoslavia-Albania border, she said. Rice hopes to help train other medical personnel to identify those women who have been raped and give guidance on how to treat for sexually transmitted diseases. "A female may be able to help better than a male," she said.

Smith has been on several previous medical work trips, but it is a first-time experience for Rice and Grostefon.

Other local individuals and businesses are helping make the trip possible. Root's Camp 'n Ski Haus and GI Joe's Army Surplus have donated equipment and supplies. Brateman's Inc. donated boots. American Freightways is donating the shipping for the supplies to Springfield. An organization called Convoy of Hope is packing and shipping the supplies.

"We have so much," said Tolbert. "The poorest of us in this area are worlds beyond people there. We don't have a clue."

The Rev. Ann Steiner Lantz is director of chaplains at Parkview and chairwoman of the hospital's mission and community outreach committee. She is coordinating the hospital's involvement in the project.

"This is part of our mission and our Judeo-Christian heritage," she said. "It's the right thing to do."

"What we're doing is a drop in the bucket," Lantz said. "But if everyone does a little, we can help a whole lot."

Donations to help with the cost of sending the medical team from Fort Wayne can be sent to First Assembly of God, 3301 Coliseum Blvd. E., Fort Wayne, IN 46805.

[From the News-Sentinel]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(By George Lebamon)

A group of prominent Macedonians from around North America and Europe, aided by the Fort Wayne-based Macedonian Tribune, the oldest continuously published Macedonian newspaper in the world, have formed

the Macedonian Relief Fund. The fund will provide financial assistance to agencies in Macedonia to deal with the impact of the NATO-Yugoslavia conflict.

Chris Evanoff, a Macedonian American entrepreneur in the Detroit area, will chair the effort. He will be assisted by people around the country, including myself.

"Nearly 150,000 Kosovar refugees have flooded the tiny country of Macedonia in less than a week, creating a humanitarian catastrophe of unprecedented proportions," Evanoff said. That total could increase to nearly a quarter of a million refugees, he added. He also noted, "Macedonia was assured by NATO nations that sufficient assistance would be available to care for these unfortunate victims of war and ethnic cleansing. The delay in getting aid to the region has crippled the Macedonian economy and its capacity to sustain relief efforts."

The refugee crisis so far has cost the Macedonia republic more than \$250 million. Total costs this year could exceed \$1.5 billion.

There are about 500,000 Macedonians in North America. The group has established a Macedonian Relief Fund account at Comerica Bank in Detroit. Contributions in the form of checks, credit card payments and wire transfers can be mailed to: The Macedonian Relief Fund, c/o Comerica Bank, 28801 Groesbeck, Roseville, MI 48066. Information requests can be e-mailed to mtfw@macedonian.org. The group has also set up a Web site at www.macedonianrelieffund.org to provide additional information.

MACEDONIAN RELIEF FUND FOR THE KOSOVO REFUGEE CRISIS

The Macedonian Tribune, in cooperation with Macedonians in the United States and Canada, is initiating a relief effort to provide resources to the people of Macedonia who are sharing what little they have with tens of thousands of refugees from Kosovo.

Since 1991, Macedonia has feared a humanitarian catastrophe if a crisis in Kosovo developed. Regrettably, this catastrophe has been realized. The strain of tens of thousands of refugees has crippled Macedonia, destabilizing its economy and progress toward a democratic, free society. Not only are refugees suffering, but so are the people of Macedonia as their factories have been closed and work has come to a halt.

Donations can be mailed to the Macedonian Relief Fund, c/o Comerica Bank, 28801 Groesbeck, Roseville, MI 48066. Reference bank account #1851014603. To wire donations, use transit/routing #072000096, refer to the bank account number and Comerica.

You can donate by check or with Visa or Master Card. No donation is too small, none too large.

MARSHALL CENTER
ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL,
Columbia City, IN, May 2, 1999.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN SOUDER: I am pleased to have been requested to forward details of my students' Kosovo clothing drive to you. I welcome this opportunity to illustrate the scholastic merit of an unconventional learning activity:

Teaching current events to young people with little or no background in geography or history is a challenge. (Most of the alternative students cannot locate Europe on a map, and one of them even thought NATO was a country.) So I try to make every lesson relevant by working from what they do know. And at-risk kids, just like at-war kids, "know" suffering and deprivation.

Twenty-five percent of my students have lost a parent to unnatural causes. Twelve percent have been homeless. Most have survived on rice or beans or cereal for extended periods. All have lost friends to violence, and all have been outcasts most of their lives.

Do they understand the politics of this (or any) war? No. But they understand what it means to be orphaned, to be vagrant, to be hungry, to mourn, and to be hated. They fully understand what it means to be a refugee.

So they collect clothes to help others—and end up helping themselves in the process. In the process, they are working cooperatively with adults (employees in the building, their parents, community members) they normally consider adversaries. They are earning respect for a job well-planned and efficiently executed: In just two weeks a mere dozen students have collected enough clothing, shoes, socks, and undergarments for about 3600 refugees. Remarkably, these students who anticipate failure and disapproval at every turn are succeeding at something meaningful.

While they may never compose a thesis comparing and contrasting the present conflict with events in the Balkans leading up to WWII, they have learned to advertise a campaign, schedule and share tasks, meet deadlines, calculate weight and cubic yard measurements, arrange transportation and more.

I'm glad you inquired about the project. We appreciate your knowledge and support as you debate the merit of alternative education programs. We need critical resources to raise citizens as well as test scores.

Sincerely,

REBECCA R. ROADY,
Teacher.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BERRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the special order time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS ACT FOR SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Madam Speaker, I would like to speak this evening about the Prescription Drug Fairness Act for Seniors. This legislation will help the problem that our Nation's seniors have had to deal with for years, and that is the outrageous prices of prescription drugs in this country.

The district that I represent has the highest number of senior citizens that live only on Social Security of any district in the country. When I hold meetings in the First Congressional District of Arkansas, I hear about two issues, and that is the agriculture crisis and the high cost of prescription drugs, especially for seniors.

I also get letters from Arkansas seniors who tell me every day that they cannot afford to pay for all their needs; specifically, all their medicine and all their food.

I also get letters from Arkansas seniors who tell me that their drug bills are massive. Seniors are not following their doctors' orders. Some of them have been given prescriptions which they cannot afford to fill. Others have filled prescriptions which they cannot afford to take as directed.

Because they cannot pay the rent, pay the electrical bills, buy food and take very expensive prescription drugs, they either stop taking them or they take less than is prescribed by their doctor. They are doing things that in the long run are harmful to their health. I find it amazing that we tell our seniors that they can live longer if they take this pill or that pill but then if they cannot afford the medication that keeps them alive we do not do anything about it.

The Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act of 1999 is a chance for us to do something about it. It is a chance to step forward and show our seniors that we care about their well-being.

Madam Speaker, this legislation allows seniors, Medicare beneficiaries, to purchase prescription drugs at reduced prices. It allows pharmacies to purchase prescription drugs at the best price available to the Federal Government. It is estimated to reduce prescription drug prices for seniors by over 40 percent.

The average American under 65 takes only four prescriptions a year. The average senior citizen over 65 takes an average of 14 prescriptions a year. Our seniors suffer from more than one chronic condition: hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, glaucoma, circulatory problems, and many others. Medicare beneficiaries spend over \$700 per year on average for prescription drugs and many seniors spend much more than that, some as much as \$700 a month.

Are the pharmaceutical companies hurting for profits? Certainly not. They are the most profitable businesses in existence. Last year they had a net profit of \$24.5 billion, or 17 percent of their revenues.

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Certainly we have no objection to the drug companies being profitable, and hope they continue doing so. Here is a letter that a senior in my district sent to me about this very problem.

She said, "I want to thank you for introducing a bill to investigate the extreme cost of prescription drugs. As I attempt to control blood pressure, cholesterol, treat a thyroid deficiency, and restless leg syndrome, it costs me over \$100 a month. I have had to cut out my arthritis medicine that costs \$125 a month that the doctor prescribed, and I have had to return to aspirin, which

my doctor insists I should not take with these other medications.

"Please do what you can to get the cost of prescriptions back down to a reasonable level. I have had numerous people tell me that they cannot afford the medicines that are prescribed for them."

Madam Speaker, sadly enough, this letter is not something that should surprise anyone here, because I am sure that if we talk to most of the constituents in Members' districts, they will tell us they have received similar letters and they have talked to many seniors that have the same problem.

What do we do? Do we continue to stand by and allow our seniors to be taken advantage of, robbed, by the pharmaceutical manufacturing companies? Fortunately, we have a bill that has 108 cosponsors that will help those seniors who find themselves choosing between food and medicine.

I call on all my colleagues to stand up for our seniors and sign on to this bill. It is a good bill. It is a step in the right direction. It does the right thing as it concerns the senior citizens of this country.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to use the special order time of the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. NORTHUP). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

TRUE BIPARTISANSHIP NEEDED TO SAVE MEDICARE AND HELP AMERICA'S NEEDIEST SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my friend, the gentleman from Arkansas, detail a genuine problem. And as the citizen honored to represent the Sixth Congressional District of Arizona, home to many of America's seniors who endured a Great Depression, who took part in World War II, who built our American economy into the envy of the world, and who now, in their golden years, have time to enjoy a quality of life unparalleled, I still understand that for many there are genuine problems.

How unfortunate it is, then, Madam Speaker, that when those of us in our commonsense, conservative majority move in a bipartisan manner to offer real choices to help the neediest seniors in our society, to offer alternative plans out from the auspices and away from the auspices of big government and bureaucratic solutions, how unfor-

tunate it is that those who claim to want a bipartisan remedy turn a deaf ear, Madam Speaker, I think particularly to the latest effort to help us save and strengthen Medicare: to a bipartisan Commission, with noteworthy Americans from coast-to-coast, and in particular representatives of both parties, the Senator from Louisiana, Mr. BREAU, and my colleague on the Committee on Ways and Means, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), who took a long, hard look at Medicare, especially in the wake of the courageous steps this Congress took in the face of withering propaganda which the press accurately described as Mediscare, intent on scaring our seniors and obscuring the choices, and yet, despite that, we came back, we saved Medicare, and yet we want to strengthen it in additional ways.

How interesting it was, Madam Speaker, to observe the labors of that bipartisan commission, and how wonderful it was to see Senator BREAU and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) truly fashion a bipartisan solution. How sad it is to report, Madam Speaker, the unfortunate efforts of some to avoid a solution, to avoid helping the neediest seniors, and instead, attempt to invent an issue.

Madam Speaker, in a few short days a Star Wars prequel will be released, it may already have been in the theaters, with wonderful flights of fantasy and fiction, but Madam Speaker, we have not a prequel but a sequel about to be unfurled, Mediscare II.

Because in the wake of the bipartisan solution that Senator BREAU, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), and others from both sides of the aisle fashioned, the word went out from the White House: A supermajority of 11 members of this Commission had to vote to approve the Commission's recommendations to take those good ideas and move them into the realm of sound public policy.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the word went out from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, from our president, that by actually embracing the bipartisan solution, some in this Chamber of the liberal persuasion would be deprived of an issue, an issue to drive a wedge among Americans, an issue to again scare seniors.

Thus, Mediscare II took flight, because 10 members of the Commission voted for this commonsense solution to help the neediest seniors, but the presidential appointees from this body refused to vote for the program.

How ironic it was, Madam Speaker, that our president, one who has come to this Chamber again and again and offered words of reconciliation and the term "bipartisanship," how sad it is that he sent those instructions, and how unfortunate it is that our president, the afternoon the Medicare Commission's recommendations were voted